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UN Peacekeeping Missions: The Lessons from Cambodia

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I S S U E S

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The U.S. Congress established the East-West Center in 1960 to foster mutual understanding and cooperation among the governments and peoples of the Asia-Pacific region, including the United States. Principal funding for the Center comes from the U.S. government, with additional support provided by private agencies, individuals and corporations and more than 20 Asian and Pacific governments.

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SUMMARY As the United Nations reevaluates peacekeeping operations following setbacks in Somalia and Bosnia, it can point to the overall success of its mission in Cambodia. The massive UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) helped to rebuild a country shattered by a brutal dictatorship and a dozen years of civil war. The UN force withdrew after organizing free elections that put a coalition government in place. "Something clearly went right in Cambodia," says Judy L. Ledgerwood, who served with UNTAC's information and education section. Ledgerwood gives an "on-the-ground" view of the mission's successes and shortcomings and provides advice for future peacekeeping missions. Most effective were the election operation and the radio station; least successful was an undisciplined civilian police force. The mission was also hampered by UN bureaucracy and staffing shortages as well as inattention to social problems such as prostitution and HIV/AIDS. The gains are now threatened by an unrepentant Khmer Rouge force still getting assistance from across the border in Thailand.

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**Cambodia's lessons
are important given
the UN's expanding
role**

In the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh, the streets are quieter these days. The thousands of UN vehicles are gone from the roads and, despite the busy jostling of new private cars and motorcycles, there is a sense of relative calm in the city. The UN forces left behind a weakened but undefeated Khmer Rouge, which is still fighting the new government from the jungles bordering

Thailand. Within the fragile coalition government, frantic power struggles continue as new appointees and political insiders consolidate their power networks in various governmental ministries. Nevertheless, life in Phnom Penh is quiet, especially compared to life in Mogadishu or Sarajevo. Although the circumstances are different in each case, something clearly went right with the UN's Cambodia mission. The lessons to be learned from the successes and the failures of the mission are the focus of this paper.

These lessons are important given the debate over the expanding role of UN peacekeeping forces in settling post-Cold War conflicts. "In

1987 the United Nations was running just five operations with a combined manpower of some 10,000 soldiers and an annual budget of about \$233 million. . . . Today the United Nations has 18 peacekeeping operations and has deployed some 75,000 troops at an annual cost of more than \$3 billion." (*New York Times*, December 12, 1993.)

United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali favors this expanded role for UN forces and proclaimed in a 1992 report that "Never before in its history has the United Nations been so actively engaged and so widely expected to respond to needs both immediate and pervasive. . . . Clearly, it is in our power to bring about a renaissance—to create a new United Nations for a new international era."

But others see UN operations as overextended—"asked to do too much with too little," in the words of Kofi Annan, undersecretary-general for Peacekeeping Operations (*Time*, November 1993). Budgetary constraints and cumbersome

Parties to the Cambodian Peace Agreement

State of Cambodia (SOC) [before 1989 called People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK)]

Socialist government that was installed by Vietnam in 1979 and ruled the country until 1993 with the backing of Vietnam and the former Soviet Union. The SOC, led by Hun Sen, in theory turned over control of five key ministries to the UN after the 1991 peace agreement, but the administrative and police structure remained largely intact. The SOC's political party, the Cambodian People's Party, came in second to FUNCINPEC in the election.

Khmer Rouge: Party of Democratic Kampuchea

Extremist Marxist faction led by Pol Pot that took power in 1975 and unleashed a reign of terror that killed up to 1.5 million Cambodians. Overthrown by Vietnam's 1979 invasion but fought a guerrilla war with allies FUNCINPEC and KPNLF against the Vietnamese-installed government for the next decade with the backing of the United States, China, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

FUNCINPEC: United National Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia

Royalist faction loyal to former king Norodom Sihanouk; never as militarily strong as Khmer Rouge. Won the most seats in the new parliament; Sihanouk regained the throne.

KPNLF: Khmer People's National Liberation Front

Pro-Western force containing some members of Vietnam War-era Lon Nol government; like FUNCINPEC, never as strong militarily as Khmer Rouge. Bitterly divided, KPNLF split into two parties before the election, one of which (headed by Son Sann) won seats in the new parliament.

How the local population views the mission is of central importance

procedures mean a lack of trained manpower and long delays in receiving crucial supplies. Donor nations, meanwhile, are balking at the prospect of paying for expensive and ineffective operations. President Clinton warned in December 1993 that "The United Nations simply cannot become engaged in every one of the world's conflicts. If the American people are to say yes to peacekeeping, the United Nations must know when to say no."

This paper discusses from an "on-the-ground" perspective what worked and what did not in the UN mission in Cambodia and presents some specific suggestions for future peacekeeping missions. The success of any UN mission depends upon global and regional concerns to be sure, but also upon what the local people perceive about the intentions, strength, and efficacy of the UN force. Occupying forces, no matter what their goals, can easily come to be perceived not as neutral intermediaries helping to settle the dispute but as the enemy themselves. For the UN mission in Cambodia to succeed, it was vital that the Cambodians understand why the UN soldiers were there, see a prospect of their lives changing for the better, and believe that their participation as voters was worth the risk they took in going to the polls. I believe that how UN forces will be viewed by the local population should not be a peripheral concern but must instead be the primary focus of mission design.

History

During the brutal Khmer Rouge rule of the country they called Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979), perhaps as many as 1.5 million Cambodians—or one in six—died from starvation, disease, overwork, and execution. In 1979, Vietnam invaded Cambodia, drove out the Khmer Rouge, and set up a new socialist government called the People's Republic of Kampuchea. For the next 12 years, a civil war raged as the new government and its Vietnamese backers were challenged by a coalition based in Thailand that included the remnants of the Khmer Rouge and

two weaker forces, the Cambodia royalist faction loyal to the former king, Norodom Sihanouk, and known by the acronym FUNCINPEC, and the pro-Western KPNLF force. This very strange alliance was supported by China, the United States, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), while the new government and its Vietnamese backers received aid from the Soviet Union and its allies. More than one-half million Cambodian refugees fled the country; some 200,000 resettled in western countries but another 350,000 remained in refugee camps along the Thai-Cambodia border.

Peace negotiations began in 1988, and in the spring of the following year, the Vietnamese-backed PRK government changed its name to the State of Cambodia (SOC) and announced sweeping reforms that included reinstating Buddhism as the state religion, allowing a free market economy, and most importantly legalizing the private ownership of land. The Vietnamese, under diplomatic and economic pressure, gradually reduced their forces in Cambodia and completely withdrew in September 1989.

The peace negotiations took place in a rapidly changing world. The breakup of the former Soviet Union meant that aid to Vietnam and Cambodia disappeared overnight. The new atmosphere in the UN Security Council enabled the superpowers to agree on a settlement acceptable to their client states—including, at the time of the signing, the Khmer Rouge. A peace agreement was signed in October 1991 in Paris with all parties agreeing to disarm their forces and allow the UN to deploy throughout the country and conduct new elections.

UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia

The peace agreement led to what was then the largest UN peacekeeping mission in history, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia or UNTAC. The mission, which cost more than \$1.5 billion, was organized into seven major components: military, civilian police, electoral,

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human rights, rehabilitation, repatriation, and civil administration.

What the vast majority of rural Cambodians saw of UNTAC members, besides their ubiquitous white Toyota land cruisers and Nissan pickups jolting up and down the country roads, were individual electoral staff and civilian police who were posted throughout the countryside in district towns and traveled to villages during voter registration and polling. They were also likely to have seen UNTAC military patrols made up of soldiers from many nations—Uruguayans, Pakistanis, Dutch, Indians, French, and so on. German military doctors provided medical care, Russian civilian pilots flew the helicopters, Australian signal men handled communications, and the roads were repaired by Chinese, Japanese, Polish, and Thai engineers.

UNTAC: What Worked

Election. UNTAC's major accomplishment and biggest gamble was the election, successfully held in May 1993 despite a boycott by the Khmer Rouge. Pre-election violence, including the murder of a Japanese electoral volunteer and his in-

terpreter, had almost caused the cancellation of the balloting. As it turned out, about 96 percent of the eligible populace registered to vote and—despite Khmer Rouge threats to attack polling sites and take revenge on anyone who voted—just under 90 percent of those registered went to the polls. The election resulted in large wins for the royalist FUNCINPEC party (45 percent) and the Cambodia People's Party (the political party of the SOC administration: 38 percent), as well as smaller gains for a party associated with the pro-Western KPNLF faction. Since no single party won the two-thirds majority needed to approve a new constitution, a coalition government was formed that included all three parties.

Most of the day-to-day work of organizing the election fell to the district electoral supervisors—volunteers, mostly young and idealistic, from many different countries who hired and worked with local staff to register the eligible voters in their districts. They lived for six months to a year in district towns throughout the Cambodian countryside under very basic conditions, learning such practical skills as how to winch land cruisers out of muddy swamps, how to set up a laminating machine in a thatch hut, and even how to deal

Components of the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)

Military: Numbered 16,000, the bulk of the mission, and made up of armed peacekeeping troops and unarmed military observers that were responsible for monitoring ceasefire violations.

Civilian police: Another large component, 3,600 personnel assigned to supervise the local police, conduct some police training, and help protect human rights.

Electoral: Assigned to register and educate voters and conduct the election; also included 1,000 International Polling Station Observers during the balloting.

Human Rights: Assigned to investigate reports of human rights abuses and conduct training and education on human rights; also monitored prisons and negotiated for release of political prisoners.

Rehabilitation: Coordinated reconstruction projects including work on roads and bridges and development work in villages that had returnees.

Repatriation: Worked for repatriation of 350,000 refugees in camps along Thai border.

Civil administration: Assigned to supervise administrative structures of former government and resistance groups in five key areas: Foreign Affairs, Defense, Finance, Information, and Interior (police and internal security).

with direct political intimidation. Although part of the operation's success was due to the UN's experience in running elections, credit must also be given to the dedication of the election volunteers who believed that democracy was a goal worth risking their lives for in another corner of the world. Most Cambodians saw that their motives were genuine and therefore believed that the goals of the process were altruistic.

Information and Education. The second major success of the mission was the UN radio station. Many people, including some within UNTAC, were patronizing about the average Cambodian's ability to comprehend the range of choices that the election offered. In fact, Cambodians knew very well that they had a choice; the question in their minds was whether or not they could vote their conscience without retaliation. The UN emphasized that the choice was real and the ballot would be secret; officials spread that message by radio, which remains the key source of information in Cambodia due to minimal literacy, limited print circulation, and the very small area reached by television transmissions.

Over 12 years of civil war, the propaganda machines of the different factions had presented the population with diametrically opposed versions of reality. Khmer Rouge radio had depicted its army as the only force protecting a country overrun by millions of Vietnamese, not just soldiers but settlers as well—a falsehood that was accepted as fact by hundreds of thousands of listening refugees in camps along the Thai border and in other countries. From the government established by Vietnam in 1979, people heard largely stock phrases on the glories of the revolution and assurances that the government was the only force standing against the return of the murderous Khmer Rouge.

UNTAC radio provided information without any of these political biases, playing the messages of all registered political parties and telling people that they had the right to choose which candidates to elect. Most importantly, UNTAC con-

vinced Cambodians that their vote would be secret. The broadcasts spoke openly about political intimidation and violence, getting across the message that the UN was not as blind as it appeared despite its inability to disarm the factions or stop political intimidation and human rights abuses.

Military restraint. One of the greatest strengths of the military component has also been cited as its greatest weakness; the UNTAC troops did not fire on any of the factional forces except in self defense and they never forced their way into Khmer Rouge territory (which comprised thinly populated heavily forested or mountainous areas of the country). This strategy of restraint came at a cost, as UNTAC soldiers were called cowards by the SOC government media, which said that "UNTACs" could run faster than the civilian population because they had cars and helicopters to run away in. Despite the bad publicity, UNTAC never allowed itself to be goaded into fighting Cambodia's war. I believe that this contributed to the crucial perception that the UN soldiers were a neutral force. UNTAC forces succeeded in providing a sense of security throughout the country, but they were peace-keepers in the traditional sense of that term.

Unified command. An important factor in the success of the mission was a unified military command structure. The UN casualties in Somalia appear to have been due in part to having separate U.S. and UN command systems that failed to coordinate their activities. The UNTAC mission had only 50 U.S. soldiers, all of them in unarmed observer teams of mixed nationalities rather than in their own units under U.S. command. The fact that there were no distinct U.S. units meant that they could not be specifically targeted for attack, and the single command structure avoided communication problems.

Repatriation, economic infusion. The mission boasted other successes. The hundreds of thousands of refugees who had fled to Thailand since

UN radio convinced people their vote would be secret

1975 were repatriated and received money, tools and supplies, or in some cases land. Some rehabilitation projects began, including the repair of the country's main highways. The huge influx of capital from the UN mission provided a much-needed boost to the Cambodian economy, and payments to local Cambodian staff throughout the country meant that some of this money reached the local level.

UNTAC: What Did Not Work

Disarmament. UNTAC's major failure was that it never disarmed the combatants. Under the peace agreement, all forces were to gather in specific sites and surrender their arms, after which training and literacy programs would be provided to the soldiers. The Khmer Rouge, however, failed to disarm its forces; in reaction, the SOC government disarmed only about 25 percent of its forces. The two other parties to the agreement, the royalist FUNCINPEC and the pro-Western KPNLF, disarmed up to 50 percent of their forces, but both were militarily weak. The Khmer Rouge continued its attacks on Cambodians, especially SOC soldiers and civil servants, and also massacred ethnic Vietnamese civilians. On several occasions the Khmer Rouge directly attacked UNTAC positions, wounding and killing UN personnel. The SOC, for its part, alleged that the Khmer Rouge had made significant territorial gains and launched attacks against Khmer Rouge positions. More disturbing was the SOC's use of military and Interior Ministry secret police to attack the offices of opposition political parties. The pattern of violence ranged from verbal harassment to torture, bombings, and executions—all intended to terrify and immobilize the opposition.

Personnel inequities. The UN forces faced not only armed antagonists but also tensions within their own ranks. Inequities in the pay of soldiers from different nations was one cause. Under the current system, payments are made by the UN to

The UN's major failure was that it never disarmed the combatants

the contributing nation which in turn pays its soldiers. In the Cambodia mission, some governments gave their soldiers the full UN wage in addition to their local salary while others kept most of the money and only paid the soldiers their local wage. As a result, soldiers from different countries faced the same dangers for very different compensation, and this inevitably affected morale. In future peacekeeping missions, some sort of minimum wage seems necessary to ensure that the wage differential is not significant.

While contingents from many nations served with distinction, the behavior of a few others shamed every member of the UNTAC mission. There were complaints of some UNTAC military and police getting drunk, committing crimes, and causing civilian deaths by recklessly driving UN vehicles. By all accounts, the most disruptive military element was the battalion from Bulgaria. According to one report, up to one-quarter of the original battalion was filled with convicts rather than trained soldiers in an apparent money-making scheme (*Washington Post*, October 31, 1993). Some minimum level of military training and discipline should be a requirement for participation in any future missions.

Because Japanese participation in the mission was such a sensitive issue at home, Japanese military personnel were assigned to relatively safe areas with extra security and more luxurious quarters than other UN troops. Some Japanese civilian police officers were even spared disciplinary action for abandoning their posts. This led to resentment on the part of other UN forces and affected morale. Personnel from all nations taking part in a UN peacekeeping operation should operate under a central UN command with a standard set of requirements, protection, and compensation.

Civilian police. Lack of adequate training and discipline also plagued the 3,600-member civilian police component that was supposed to train and supervise the local police and help protect human rights during the mission. Civilian police officers,

like military observers and civilian staff, received the full \$130 per diem payments—a total of \$300 million—in addition to their salaries. Because they were theoretically on duty 24 hours a day, they were also given five days of compensatory time off every month away from their posting sites. All of this made the UN police officers among the most expensive components of the mission. They were also among the most visible, assigned throughout the country like the election workers, which was unfortunate since the component was among the least successful of the operation.

Civilian police officers were assigned throughout the country as individuals, not as national units, so there were officers from several different countries in each location. Not all officers spoke English or French as was supposed to be the case, so officers at some police stations had no common language. Although all police officers were supposed to patrol, some countries sent officers who could not drive. Some police officers did not work well together; in some cases older officers ignored younger officers who were given command of their station. The police officers were not clearly briefed on the situation or trained in their duties, and at times many seemed to have no idea what their role was. As a result of this sense of uselessness, boredom set in and many police officers spent their time at play instead of at their duties. There was no clear way to discipline such officers other than to send them home, and to avoid that drastic step some of the worst offenders were simply transferred to other units.

The civilian police component should be completely redesigned for future missions. Police officers might be chosen from the same countries as the military forces posted in a given area, allowing the command structures to be linked so that orders could be enforced or disciplinary action taken if required. Before forces are deployed, they should get training on the mission at hand as well as on the social customs of the country.

Social relations. Many of the complaints

from the Cambodian people about the behavior of UNTAC forces focused on these civilian police officers. The local population was offended by some officers getting drunk, causing traffic accidents, and bringing prostitutes to live with them in rural towns. The fact that many of the prostitutes were ethnic Vietnamese complicated the matter. Some Cambodians were more inclined to believe Khmer Rouge propaganda that UNTAC was collaborating with the Vietnamese to colonize Cambodia when they saw UNTAC personnel taking Vietnamese "wives." When directly challenged on these social issues, UNTAC set up a community relations office to handle such cases as traffic accident reports and allegations of rape.

The office also was called upon to deal with another deadly problem, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. While 21 peacekeepers died in Cambodia as a result of hostile action, more than twice that number (47) were diagnosed as being HIV-positive—and UNTAC chief medical officer Dr. Peter Fraps believes the true figure is probably as high as 150. The German field hospital treated more than 5,000 incidents of sexually transmitted diseases. Mission personnel routinely took leave in neighboring Thailand where sex tourism is a multibillion-dollar operation and where HIV/AIDS is at epidemic levels. UNTAC personnel helped introduce the disease into Cambodia and are also taking the HIV virus back to their home nations. Dr. Fraps favors compulsory HIV testing for all personnel on future UN missions as well as courses on how to avoid contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (*Phnom Penh Post*, October 22–November 4, 1993). Although the community relations office, once it was established, passed out condoms and ran an education campaign about sexually transmitted diseases, UNTAC's efforts in this area were clearly too little and too late. And the only general policy statement on sexual activity among the mission personnel came when Yasushi Akashi, the UN secretary general's special representative who was in charge of the mission, told a staff meeting that "boys will be boys." In another

The attitude about sexual activity was 'boys will be boys'

**The mission ended
without arrests in
the worst human
rights cases**

telling action, UNTAC personnel were directed not to park UN vehicles in front of brothels.

Administration and staffing. Some of the problems of the Cambodia peacekeeping mission stemmed from the nature of the UN itself. Akashi has noted that the effectiveness of UNTAC would have been greatly enhanced if personnel and equipment had arrived more promptly. He said the budget authorization process in New York and the cumbersome nature of procurement "led to delays which affected the perceptions of Cambodians regarding UNTAC's efficiency" (*Japan Review*, Summer 1993). In fact, some have argued that the Khmer Rouge decided not to lay down their arms because they saw how slowly UN troops were being deployed and decided UNTAC was not taking control of the situation. The budget process hampered other parts of the mission. The UN radio station, for example, although crucial to the mission's success, did not come on line all over the country until a few months before the election due to wrangling over funds for booster broadcast stations.

The civil administration component, another new idea designed for the Cambodia mission, never accomplished its mission to "control" or supervise the existing administrative structures of the former government and resistance groups. The failure to control the police and national security apparatus allowed the state-sponsored political violence noted earlier. Civil administration staff were also poorly briefed on the situation and, since officials were reluctant to use people outside of the UN system, dependent upon local interpreters. As a result, some crucial negotiations were influenced by UNTAC interpreters who sympathized with or were even plants of one faction or another.

The bureaucratic nature of the UN system led to long time lags between the discovery of a problem and the decision to take corrective action, which in crisis situations was often unacceptable. Local and regional UN officials passed information to Phnom Penh that was never acted

upon. This frustrated many provincial and district-level UN personnel and often made them look foolish to their Cambodian counterparts. Reports of human rights violations, for example, were sent up the chain of command so slowly that no action was ever taken on most cases. By the time UNTAC made the decision to make some arrests in the most horrific cases, the mission was over.

The same sort of gap appeared to exist between the mission command and the UN headquarters in New York. The most public gaffe came on the day that one thousand international polling station observers were arriving to be deployed throughout Cambodia. They had been briefed on possible dangers but told they were relatively safe. On the same day, however, UN headquarters in New York ordered the evacuation of UN dependents from Phnom Penh. This decision was apparently made on the basis of news reports of impending attacks—without confirming the reports with UNTAC in Phnom Penh.

There were problems with understaffing in several crucial areas of the mission. The human rights component, for example, was ridiculously understaffed and undersupported. Only one human rights officer was assigned to each province, initially with no vehicle. Thus, even though many were extremely dedicated individuals—sometimes putting themselves in harm's way to stop or investigate abuses—there was a limit to what they could do on the ground. Serious understaffing in the UNTAC personnel department also hampered the support system for the local staff helping the UN election supervisors. While checks for expatriate staff came on time, the organization of the local payroll was bungled and Cambodians were not paid for months. Many election supervisors resorted to paying their staff from their own meager salaries; while this improved their image, it portrayed them as at odds with the UN system rather than as part of a smoothly functioning organization.

The UN was criticized for deploying too few resources for clearing the mines that infest the

country. UNTAC concentrated upon training Cambodians in the techniques of clearing mines so that there would be trained local personnel to continue the work after the mission. While these Cambodian staff continue to clear mines today, the pace of clearing land is agonizingly slow. To some extent this reflects the nature of the work and the magnitude of the problem—and the disheartening fact that mines are still being laid.

Finally, even the most successful election can be undone if the ballots are tainted, and this problem arose during the Cambodian election. Some of the metal seals used on the ballot boxes broke in transit from polling stations. These boxes were counted separately and showed no significant difference from the general trend of election results. But even so, this allowed the SOC government to claim fraud after it failed to win the election and even to threaten succession of the eastern provinces. This challenge was faced down by the UN peacekeepers who refused to leave those provinces and by international pressure that solidly maintained that the election had been free and fair. These metal seals should be replaced with a thicker and sturdier variety to prevent this from happening in any future elections.

Regional support. The question, after an election that follows years of bloodshed in a country, is whether the defeated parties will accept the outcome or resume the conflict. The support of other countries then becomes important to pressure the losers to abide by the results. In Cambodia, the elections demonstrated the lack of internal support for the Khmer Rouge; people risked their lives to walk out of areas controlled by the group in order to vote. The Khmer Rouge was clearly weakened by the results, yet it retains external assistance for its cause, which could threaten the gains of the expensive UNTAC operation.

The Khmer Rouge, still fighting the new coalition government from the northern and western border areas, is also still receiving support from across the border in Thailand. The Khmer Rouge

leases the territory it controls to Thai logging and gemstone mining interests and then uses the money to purchase arms with which to continue its guerrilla struggle. In addition to these funds from businessmen, there is evidence of more direct support from the Thai military. In December 1993, Thai civilian authorities discovered a truckload of munitions being delivered into Cambodia, and they traced it back to Thai military warehouses full of similar supplies that were being guarded by 23 Khmer Rouge soldiers. The Thai military was even accused of providing transport for Khmer Rouge forces attacking villages inside Cambodia (*New York Times*, December 19, 1993). The Thai government seems unable or unwilling to prevent this collusion.

After these incidents came to light, a Western diplomat said, "The Thais remain the lifeline for the Khmer Rouge. And the victims are the Cambodian people. Unless the Thais shut them off, the Khmer Rouge could be around forever." A senior Thai official, on the other hand, maintained that "You [presumably meaning the United States] encouraged us to establish these close contacts with the rebels, and we cannot end these relationships just overnight. We need time" (*ibid.*). The UN in December 1992 ordered an embargo on logging and gems and on supplying oil to the Khmer Rouge, but these measures were never effectively enforced. UNTAC monitors regularly intercepted shipments of logs headed for Thailand from the zones of the different factions but had no power to stop them; they could only issue a written citation notifying the company that they were in violation of the ban. The Thai press has long discussed the issue but treats it as a "public relations problem" rather than a threat to peace or to the Cambodian people. At this juncture major UN funders and backers of the Cambodian Peace Plan—especially the United States—should pressure Thailand to stop this assistance.

The Khmer Rouge, discredited by the election, still has external support

Conclusions

This has not been a comprehensive discussion of the UNTAC mission and has necessarily simplified the complexities of the situation. I stress that future mission planning should take up as a central concern the way that the mission will be perceived by the local population. Mission planners should set up information systems to keep the people informed about the process. UN personnel from all nations should operate under a common set of requirements, training, and compensation.

Both training and recruitment should be improved so that UN personnel are viewed as responsive and disciplined staff who are there for the benefit of the local residents. The components that did not accomplish their missions, such as civilian police, should be redesigned for future operations and others should be better staffed and supported. Lastly, the UN should streamline its administrative procedures so that officials can swiftly implement their decisions and revise them quickly in light of new information.

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